

MARK STEGER SMITH
Assistant U.S. Attorney
U.S. Attorney's Office
2601 Second Avenue North, Suite 3200
Billings, MT 59101
Ph: (406) 247-4667; Fax: (406) 657-6058
mark.smith3@usdoj.gov

TODD KIM
Assistant Attorney General

LUTHER L. HAJEK (CO Bar 44303)
United States Department of Justice
Environment and Natural Resources Division
999 18th St., South Terrace, Suite 370
Denver, CO 80202
Ph: (303) 844-1376; Fax: (303) 844-1350
luke.hajek@usdoj.gov

Attorneys for Federal Defendants

**IN THE UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
FOR THE DISTRICT OF MONTANA
GREAT FALLS DIVISION**

ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE, <i>et al.</i> , Plaintiffs, v. U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR, <i>et al.</i> , Defendants.	CV 20-109-GF-BMM JOINT STATUS REPORT
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Defendants U.S. Department of the Interior *et al.* (“Defendants”) and Plaintiffs Rosebud Sioux Tribe *et al.* hereby submit this joint status report pursuant to the Court’s November 2, 2021 Order, ECF No. 20, and request that the case be stayed for an additional sixty days.¹

This case involves the U.S. Bureau of Land Management’s (“BLM”) approval of a right-of-way for the Keystone XL Pipeline. The case has been stayed following President Biden’s revocation of the 2019 Presidential Permit allowing the pipeline to cross the border. *See* Protecting Public Health and the Environment and Restoring Science to Tackle the Climate Crisis, 86 Fed. Reg. 7,037, 7,041 (Jan. 20, 2021). In addition, TC Energy announced the termination of the Keystone XL Pipeline Project on June 9, 2021. *See* TC Energy Corp. and TransCanada Keystone Pipeline, LP’s Notice Regarding Termination of Keystone XL Pipeline, *Indigenous Env’tl. Network v. Trump*, No. 4:19-cv-28-BMM, ECF No. 167 (“June 9, 2021 Notice”).

Since its announcement regarding the termination of the project, TC Energy has taken significant steps to wind down authorizations that the company obtained or sought from federal agencies. As previously reported, among other things, TC Energy has relinquished an incidental take permit authorized by the U.S. Fish and

¹ The project proponent, TC Energy, has not yet moved to intervene in this case, but it supports this request.

Wildlife Service pursuant to section 10 of the Endangered Species Act and a temporary use permit for an access road from BLM. *See* November 1, 2021 Joint Status Report at 2, ECF No. 19. On August 31, 2021, BLM approved TC Energy's decommissioning plans for the border segment of the pipeline. *Id.* Subsequently, the Montana Department of Environmental Quality also approved TC Energy's decommissioning plans for the border segment. *Id.*

On September 2, 2021, BLM issued a decision to approve TC Energy's request for partial relinquishment of the right-of-way grant and temporary use permit ("TUP"). *Id.*; *see also* BLM Decision Approving Partial Relinquishment (Sept. 2, 2021), Ex. 1. BLM approved full relinquishment of the right-of-way grant and TUP for all portions of the right-of-way except for the 0.94-mile border segment. *See* November 1, 2021 Joint Status Report at 2. Retention of the right-of-way for the 0.94-mile border segment is necessary to enable TC Energy to complete decommissioning and reclamation activities consistent with the terms of the grant, including the bonding stipulations. As the decision notes, BLM will relinquish and close the right-of-way for the border segment upon completion and approval of reclamation.

On September 22, 2021, TC Energy began the removal of the pipeline consistent with the approved decommissioning plan. *See id.* Since the filing of the last report, TC Energy has completed the removal of the pipeline in the

international border segment and reclamation of the right-of-way area, including restoration of the disturbed areas. BLM and TC Energy had a closeout conference on November 2, 2021. *See* TC Energy November 19, 2021 Letter, Ex. 2. At the closeout conference, BLM and TC Energy discussed certain issues relating to the work that was performed, and those issues were resolved. *See id.*; BLM November 23, 2021 Letter, Ex. 3. As noted above, TC Energy currently retains a limited right-of-way grant to ensure that reclamation, *i.e.*, revegetation, of the border segment is successful.

Defendants request this extension to allow BLM to determine that the site has appropriately revegetated. Once that occurs, BLM will approve TC Energy's relinquishment of this last remaining right. At that point, Defendants will confer with Plaintiffs to discuss whether any further proceedings are necessary.

The requested extension of the stay will not prejudice any party because TC Energy has announced that it has no plans to construct the pipeline "now or at any time in the future," June 9, 2021 Notice at 3, and it has now removed the pipe that was previously installed. Moreover, TC Energy has relinquished, or is in the process of relinquishing, the federal permits that would allow it to construct the pipeline. Further, Defendants and TC Energy remain obligated to provide the parties and the Court with sixty days' notice in advance of any theoretical construction of the main pipeline or new pump stations.

In light of these developments, the parties respectfully request that the Court continue the stay of the litigation deadlines for sixty days, so that the parties may determine what further proceedings may be necessary in this case. *See Landis v. N. American Co.*, 299 U.S. 248, 254 (1936) (a court has inherent authority to stay litigation). At the end of the sixty-day period, the parties will advise the Court whether further proceedings are necessary and, if so, propose a revised briefing schedule. If the parties need additional time to discuss potential further proceedings, the parties will submit a status report and request additional time to continue their discussions.

Respectfully submitted this 23rd day of December, 2021,

MARK STEGER SMITH
Assistant U.S. Attorney
U.S. Attorney's Office
2601 Second Avenue North, Suite 3200
Billings, MT 59101
Ph: (406) 247-4667; Fax: (406) 657-6058
mark.smith3@usdoj.gov

TODD KIM
Assistant Attorney General

/s/ Luther L. Hajek
LUTHER L. HAJEK (CO Bar 44303)
United States Department of Justice
Environment and Natural Resources Division
999 18th Street, South Terrace, Suite 370
Denver, CO 80202
Ph: (303) 844-1376; Fax: (303) 844-1350
luke.hajek@usdoj.gov

Attorneys for Federal Defendants

/s/ Wesley James Furlong

Wesley James Furlong (MT Bar No. 42771409)

NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS FUND

745 West 4th Avenue, Suite 502

Anchorage, AK 99501

Tel. (907) 276-0680

Fax (907) 276-2466

wfurlong@narf.org

/s/ Matthew L. Campbell

Matthew L. Campbell (pro hac vice)

NATIVE AMERICAN RIGHTS FUND

1506 Broadway

Boulder, CO 80302

Tel. (303) 447-8760

Fax (303) 443-7776

mcampbell@narf.org

Attorneys for Plaintiffs

Rosebud Sioux Tribe et al.

CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE

Pursuant to Local Rule 7.1(d)(2)(E), the foregoing is proportionately spaced, has a typeface of 14 points, and contains 801 words, excluding the tables, caption, signature, certificate of compliance, and certificate of service.

/s/ *Luther L. Hajek*
LUTHER L. HAJEK
U.S. Department of Justice

CERTIFICATE OF SERVICE

I hereby certify that on December 23, 2021, a copy of the foregoing Joint Status Report was served on all counsel of record via the Court's CM/ECF system.

/s/ Luther L. Hajek
LUTHER L. HAJEK
U.S. Department of Justice